

Audit and Governance Committee

8 July 2024

Enhanced DBS Checking

For Recommendation to Council

Cabinet Member and Portfolio:

Cllr N Ireland, Leader of the Council

Local Councillor(s):

All Councillors

Executive Director:

J Mair, Director of Legal & Democratic

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Report Status: Public (the exemption paragraph is N/A)

Brief Summary:

Individually Dorset Council councillors occupy positions of great trust in their communities. Councillors also have oversight and responsibility for a range of people based services delivered to the most vulnerable, in particular services to children and vulnerable adults. All Dorset Council councillors are corporate parents of looked after children.

Towards the end of the term of the last council, political group leaders supported the Chief Executive and the Director of Children's Services in introducing an expectation that all councillors should be the subject of enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking. Previously councillors were the subject of basic DBS checks and the move to enhanced checking of councillors with responsibilities for children and vulnerable adults was in line with recommendations made by Simon Bailey in his national review of the DBS.

All current Dorset Council councillors have completed enhanced DBS applications and we are waiting for the last few certificates to be returned by the DBS. The membership of the Council will though change over time and it is

important that the Council, as an organisation which takes its safeguarding duties seriously, should create the clearest expectation that all councillors will undertake enhanced checks. It is also important that the Council should have a clear policy about what should happen in the event that checks disclose the existence of offences by a councillor or police intelligence about a councillor.

Recommendation:

That the Committee recommend to the Full Council adoption of the Disclosure and Barring Service Checks for Councillors Policy.

Reason for Recommendation:

To create a clear expectation that all councillors will undergo enhanced DBS checks and to provide an appropriate framework within which the Chief Executive, other relevant chief officers and relevant group leader will act in the event that they become aware of matters of concern about a councillor.

1. **Financial Implications**

No direct financial implications.

2. **Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications**

None.

3. **Well-being and Health Implications**

None.

4. **Other Implications**

Reputational, for individuals

5. **Risk Assessment**

5.1 **HAVING CONSIDERED:** the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk:Low

6. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

This report raises no equalities implications.

7. **Appendices**

Draft Disclosure and Barring Service Checks for Councillors Policy.

8. Background Papers

None

9. **Report Sign Off**

11.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s)